

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 02370 180730Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8000
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 02370

BERN FOR INDIAN OCEAN DELEGATION

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UR
SUBJECT: REPORTS ON GROMYKO'S ILLNESS

1. AT FEB. 16 POL COUNSELORS' MEETING, GROMYKO'S PRO-
LONGED ABSENCE (HIS LAST PUBLIC APPEARANCE WAS FEB. 2
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 02370 180730Z

DURING PDRY PRIME MINISTER VISIT) AND APPARENT ILLNESS
WAS DISCUSSED.

2. CANADIAN COUNSELOR STATED THAT CHIEF, MFA SECOND
EUROPEAN DIVISION SUSLOV CALLED CANADIAN AMBASSADOR FORD
FEB. 9 - SHORTLY BEFORE OTTAWA ANNOUNCEMENT ON EXPULSION
SOVIET DIPLOMATS - TO DISCUSS CANADIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY

JAMIESON'S VISIT TO SOVIET UNION, WHICH WAS THEN SCHEDULED TO BEGIN ON MARCH 15. DURING CONVERSATION, SUSLOV REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISIT ON GROUNDS THAT GROMYKO WAS ILL AND WOULD NOT BE BACK FOR ANOTHER COUPLE OF WEEKS. (FORD, OF COURSE, KNEW THAT OTTAWA WOULD ALSO SHORTLY ANNOUNCE THAT JAMIESON TRIP WAS OFF.)

3. U.S. POL COUNSELOR RECALLED FEB. 15 CONVERSATION WITH FEDOSEYEV, DEPUTY CHIEF, MFA USA DEPARTMENT. WHEN ASKED WHETHER GROMYKO WAS ILL, FEDOSEYEV RESPONDED THAT HE WAS NOT ILL BUT "RESTING". GROMYKO CONTINUED TO SIGN DOCUMENTS, HE SAID, AND WOULD BE BACK TO WORK IN A FEW DAYS.

4. UK COUNSELOR SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD HAVE BEEN CUSTOMARY FOR GROMYKO TO HOST FEB. 14 FAREWELL LUNCH FOR DEPARTING UK BRITISH AMBASSADOR, FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KORNIYENKO HOSTED INSTEAD. UK COUNSELOR ALSO RELATED KORNIYENKO'S COMMENTS AT LUNCH THAT, DURING GROMYKO'S ABSENCES, HE AND THE OTHER FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, V. F. MAL'TSEV, WOULD "TAKE TURNS" IN FILLING IN FOR GROMYKO UNTIL THE FOREIGN MINISTER RETURNS. THEY WOULD FULFILL GROMYKO'S PROTOCOLARY FUNCTIONS BUT NOT ASSUME THE TITLE OF ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER. KORNIYENKO EXPLAINED FURTHER THAT HE (KORNIYENKO) WOULD

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 02370 180730Z

PERFORM THESE FUNCTIONS DURING GROMYKO'S PRESENT ABSENCE. MAL'TSEV WOULD DO THE SAME DURING GROMYKO'S NEXT ABSENCE. MATLOCK

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